

Remarks/Arguments

In the March 17, 2006 office action, claims 1-2, 4-6 and 8-11 were rejected under section 102(b) as being anticipated by Partsch (US Patent 3,875,729). Claims 12-15, 18-19 and 22 were rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Weisert (US Patent 2,568,045). Claims 3, 7, 12-15, 17-19 and 21-22 were rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Partsch.

Claim 1 is amended to specify that the reinforcing rod is inserted through the at least one retaining structure. Claim 1 is patentable over Partsch for each of the following reasons:

First, Partsch fails to disclose a grass catcher that is a one-piece molded box-like structure. Instead, Partsch relates to a grass catcher having a sheet metal bottom fastened to fabric side walls. Partsch states (at column 3, lines 32-34): "The grass catcher C is also of conventional construction and may typically consist of a bottom E suitably composed of sheet metal with a reinforcing rod J extending across the front edge, and an upstanding side wall L suitably composed of a fabric material..." The construction of Partsch's grass catcher includes attachment hardware that would tend to break or become dislodged due to normal wear and tear, which is the very problem addressed by the present invention.

Second, Partsch fails to disclose a reinforcing rod that is inserted through at least one retaining structure. Partsch refers to "reinforcing rod J" at column 3, lines 32-34, but does not show it clearly in the drawings. If one accepts the Examiner's assertion that Partsch's reinforcing rod is shown in Fig. 4, it could only be welded to the front edge of the sheet metal bottom. Partsch's reinforcing rod is not inserted through a retaining structure, and Partsch's sheet metal bottom lacks a retaining structure integrally molded into it.

Claim 2 is patentable over Partsch for at least the same reasons as claim 1 on which it depends. Additionally, Partsch fails to disclose a reinforcing rod that is generally cylindrical in shape.

Claim 3 is patentable over Partsch for at least the same reasons as claim 1 on which it depends. Additionally, Partsch fails to disclose at least three retaining structures integrally molded into the lower panel adjacent the opening.

Claim 4 is patentable over Partsch for at least the same reasons as claim 1 on

which it depends. Additionally, Partsch fails to disclose a retaining structure that is a channel.

Claim 5 is patentable over Partsch for at least the same reasons as claim 1 on which it depends. Additionally, Partsch fails to disclose a retaining structure that is a passage.

Claim 6 is patentable over Partsch for at least the same reasons as claim 1 on which it depends. Additionally, Partsch fails to disclose a retaining structure that is an offset structure.

Claim 7 is patentable over Partsch for at least the same reasons as claim 1 on which it depends. Additionally, Partsch fails to disclose a reinforcing rod that is at least partially exposed facing upwardly.

Claim 8 is patentable over Partsch for at least the same reasons as claim 1 on which it depends.

Claim 9 is patentable over Partsch for at least the same reasons as claim 1 on which it depends. Additionally, Partsch fails to disclose at least one access hole in a side panel through which the reinforcing rod is inserted.

Claim 10 is patentable over Partsch for at least the same reasons as claim 1 on which it depends.

Claim 11 is patentable over Partsch for at least the same reasons as claim 1 on which it depends. Additionally, Partsch fails to disclose internal dimensions of the at least one retaining structure that are not larger than the outer cross sectional dimension of the reinforcing rod.

Claim 12 is patentable over Weisert for each of the following reasons:

First, Weisert fails to disclose a one-piece box-shaped molded plastic grass catcher. Instead, Weisert relates to a grass catching tray "formed from a single sheet of metal..." (Column 3, lines 12-13).

Second, Weisert fails to disclose an elevated lip at the opening. Instead, Weisert's front end 15 is at the same level as bottom wall 41. Weisert states: "The front end 15 of the tray extends beyond the adjacent ends of the side flanges 11 and is cut-away at the front corners of the tray, as shown at 16, to receive the lawn mower roller supporting brackets 17..." (Column 2, lines 5-9)

Claim 13 is patentable over Weisert for at least the same reasons as claim 12 on which it depends. Additionally, Weisert fails to disclose a pair of opposing side

panels on each side of the one-piece box-shaped plastic grass catcher, and an access hole through at least one of the opposing side panels through which the reinforcing rod may be inserted. Instead, Weisert relates to a rod 20 received by a sleeve formation 21 formed at the front end of the tray. Weisert's rod does not go through access holes in side walls 42.

Claim 14 is patentable over Weisert for at least the same reasons as claim 12 on which it depends.

Claim 15 is patentable over Weisert for at least the same reasons as claim 12 on which it depends. Additionally, Weisert fails to disclose at least one plastic retaining structure that is an offset structure. Instead, Weisert shows sleeve 21 at the front end of a sheet metal tray.

Claim 17 is patentable over Partsch. Partsch fails to disclose a reinforcing rod that has a length less than the span between the pair of opposing side panels.

Claim 18 is patentable over Partsch or Weisert for each of the following reasons:

First, Partsch and Weisert fail to disclose a reinforced one-piece molded plastic grass catcher. Instead, Partsch relates to a sheet metal and fabric grass catcher, and Weisert relates to a sheet metal grass catcher. Neither is molded from plastic, and neither addresses or solves the problem of how to reinforce a molded plastic structure without attachment hardware that could break or dislodge.

Second, Partsch and Weisert fail to show retaining structures integrally molded into the lower lip that are the only structures gripping the reinforcing rod in place. If Partsch shows a reinforcing rod in Fig. 4, as the Examiner suggests, it appears to be welded to the metal bottom of the grass catcher, not gripped by retaining structures integrally molded into the lower lip. Weisert's sleeve formation 21 is not integrally molded into the lower lip, but is formed by bending sheet metal.

Claim 19 is patentable over Partsch or Weisert for at least the same reasons as claim 18 on which it depends. Additionally, Partsch and Weisert fail to disclose a reinforced grass catcher that comprises a plastic box-like structure having walls with substantially uniform thickness, each of the integral retaining structures having substantially the same thickness as the walls.

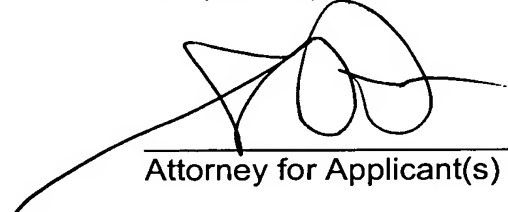
Claim 21 is patentable over Partsch for at least the same reasons as claim 18 on which it depends.

Claim 22 is patentable over Partsch or Weisert for at least the same reasons as claim 18 on which it depends. Additionally, Partsch and Weisert fail to disclose integral retaining structures that have an internal dimension, and the reinforcing rod has an outer cross sectional dimension no smaller than the internal dimension of the integral retaining structures. Partsch lacks any integral retaining structures, and Weisert states: "rod 20 is received by a sleeve formation 21" without referring to the relative dimensions.

In conclusion, it is believed that claims 1-15, 17-19, and 21-22 are in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully,



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